

Message Text

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64

ACTION EUR-25

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AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

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AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

AMCONSUL LUANDA

AMCONSUL LOURENCO MARQUES

USMISSION NATO

USMISSION USUN

AMCONSUL OPORTO

AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA

C O N F I D E N T I A L LISBON 1118

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR PO ML

SUBJ: DUTCH DEMARCHE ON PORTUGUESE COLONIALISM

REF: THE HAGUE 1419

1. WHILE WE CANNOT COMMENT ON DUTCH MEMORANDUM WITHOUT
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REVIEWING TEXT (EUR/IB: PLEASE SEND), WE BELIEVE

DEPARTMENT AND ADDRESSEE POSTS MAY WISH TAKE INTO ACCOUNT RECENT EVENTS IN PORTUGAL WHEN DECIDING HOW TO RESPOND TO DUTCH.

2. AS SOME ADDRESSEES AWARE, PORTUGUESE POLITICAL LIFE HAS BEEN IN CRISIS SINCE FEBRUARY 22 PUBLICATION OF BOOK "PORTUGAL AND THE FUTURE" BY GENERAL SPINOLA, FORMER (1968-1973) GOVERNOR AND COMMANDER IN PORTUGUESE GUINEA, AND MORE RECENTLY ARMED FORCES VICE CHIEF OF STAFF. IN BOOK SPINOLA ARGUES FOR POLITICAL SOLUTION TO OVERSEAS ISSUE, AND FAVORED NEW RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PORTUGAL AND TERRITORIES. IN IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THREE WEEKS PRIME MINISTER CAETANO SOUGHT TO HOLD THE LINE AGAINST ANTI-SPINOLA RIGHTISTS. LAST WEEK HE GAVE IN, AND REMOVED SPINOLA AND HIS SUPERIOR, ARMED FORCES CHIEF OF STAFF COSTA GOMES. IMMEDIATE RESULT WAS MUTINY BY 200-MAN ARMY UNIT AND ABORTIVE MARCH ON LISBON. IN WAKE OF THESE EVENTS, AT LEAST 33 OFFICERS HAVE BEEN ARRESTED, TWO OTHER GENERAL OFFICERS HAVE BEEN REMOVED, AND THE TRADITIONAL PORTUGUESE RIGHT IS IN THE ASCENDANCY. IN THE PRESENT YEASTY SITUATION IT IS DIFFICULT TO PREDICT WHETHER OR NOT THE RIGHT WILL STAY ON TOP, BUT THE FORMAL INSTRUMENTS OF CONTROL, ESPECIALLY THE PRESIDENCY, ARE IN ITS HANDS. PERTINENT TELEGRAMS (LISBON 0985 AND 1022) REPEATED INFO ADDEES.

3. TWO ELEMENTS IN SPINOLA APPROACH WHICH PARTICULARLY OBJECTIONABLE TO PORTUGUESE RIGHT ARE HIS ADVOCACY OF USE OF PLEBISCITES TO DEMONSTRATE ACCEPTANCE (OR REJECTION) BY PEOPLES IN PORTUGUESE AFRICAN TERRITORIES OF HIS PROPOSED FEDERAL SYSTEM, AND HIS IMPLICATION THAT GOP SHOULD NEGOTIATE WITH INSURGENTS. IN MARCH 5 SPEECH OSTENSIBLY REPUDIATING SPINOLA APPROACH, PRIME MINISTER CAETANO WAS SOMEWHAT AMBIGUOUS ON THESE POINTS, HE ARGUES AGAINST PLEBISCITES ON GROUND THAT WORLD WOULD NOT ACCEPT AS GENUINE ANY PLEBISCITE WHICH RESULTED IN OTHER THAN INDEPENDENCE FOR AFRICAN TERRITORIES UNDER BLACK RULE. HE BASED HIS REJECTION OF NEGOTIATION WITH INSURGENTS ON ARGUMENT THAT NEGOTIAT-
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ING WITH PAIGC IN TERMS WHICH PREVENTED GOP FROM REFUSING TO NEGOTIATE WITH ANGOLA AND MOZAMBIQUE INSURGENTS WAS UNACCEPTABLE (THEREBY HINTING THAT TERMS MIGHT BE FOUND WHICH WOULD PERMIT NEGOTIATION WITH PAIGC WITHOUT REPERCUSSIONS IN ANGOLA AND MOZAMBIQUE). AMBIGUITIES SUCH AS THESE, FACT HE PERMITTED PUBLICATION OF BOOK IN FIRST PLACE, PLUS OTHER FACTORS IN HIS HANDLING OF SITUATION HAVE HEIGHTENED RIGHTIST SUSPICIONS OF CAETANO

AND MADE HIS OWN SURVIVAL IN OFFICE QUESTIONABLE.

4. IT IS CLEAR THAT UNDER PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES, ADVOCACY BY FOREIGN GOVERNMENTS OF NEGOTIATIONS WITH INSURGENTS WOULD MEET WITH ADAMANT REJECTION BY GOP. IN CONTEXT OF SPINOLA CRISIS, GOP WOULD LOOK UPON SUCH ADVOCACY AS UNWARRANTED INTERFERENCE IN GOP DOMESTIC AFFAIRS. ANY HINT THAT CAETANO WAS CONTEMPLATING SUCH A COURSE WOULD PROBABLY COST HIM HIS JOB AS LONG AS THE RIGHT REMAINS DOMINANT.

5. IN OUR OWN CONTACTS, WE HAVE TAKEN LINE OF, FIRST, GIVING ASSURANCE THAT WE DO NOT MEAN TO MEDDLE IN PORTUGAL'S INTERNAL DEBATES, BUT THEN COMMENTING THAT ADOPTION BY PORTUGAL OF AN APPROACH SIMILAR TO SPINOLA'S WOULD IMPROVE PORTUGAL'S IMAGE INTERNATIONALLY. WHILE PORTUGAL'S MOST IMPLACABLE FOES WOULD BRAND ANYTHING APPROACHING A PLEBISCITE AS A SHAM IF THE RESULTS WERE IN FAVOR OF CONTINUED ASSOCIATION WITH PORTUGAL, SUCH A DEMONSTRATION OF THE WILL OF THE MAJORITY WOULD BE MOST HELPFUL TO THOSE WHO ARE

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